



**DEDICATED TO THE CLERGY OF EVERY PROTESTANT  
COMMUNION; AND REDUCED INTO THE FORM  
OF LETTERS;**

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

“READ, MARK, LEARN, AND INWARDLY DIGEST”

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# EXTRACT

FROM

## AN AMICABLE DISCUSSION.

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THE HOLY SCRIPTURE.—THE WORDS OF  
PROMISE.

OPEN, if you please, the 6th chapter of the Gospel of Saint John, which is too long to be here transcribed entire: and have the goodness merely to follow, with the book in your hand, the argument with which this chapter will supply you. The Evangelist relates in how miraculous a manner our Saviour fed in the desert the five thousand men who had followed him: how he withdrew himself by flight from the transports of their admiration, and the honors they wished to pay him by proclaiming him King: how towards night he rejoined the vessel of the apostles in the middle of the sea of Tiberias, walking over the waters to them: how, in fine, he himself was rejoined the next day at Caphernaum, by the multitude he had fed the day before. This conversation between Jesus and the Jewish multitude, which cannot be sufficiently meditated upon, commences at the 25th verse. After having blamed their eagerness for perishable food, and their indifference

In seeking for meat that endureth to life everlasting he tells them that the means of obtaining it is to believe in him whom God has sent them: he reproaches them for their incredulity in his regard, in spite of the miracles he had performed in their presence. He adds, that the manna of which he had spoken, and which their fathers had eaten in the desert, was not the heavenly bread: that the bread of God is that which cometh down from Heaven; that he himself is the true heavenly bread, that he is come down from Heaven: that he had been sent by his Father to save them. At these words the Jews no longer contain themselves. "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" "How then saith he, I came down from Heaven?"\* But Jesus, without revealing to them the secret of his human birth, still leads them to his celestial origin and to his divine mission, and insists more strongly than ever upon the obligation of believing in his words and his testimony. "Amen, amen I say to you: he that believeth in me hath everlasting life.† What is the meaning of this exordium, and of this manner of opening himself by halves, and by degrees? How comes it, that he reminds them at repeated intervals of the necessity of the faith due to his character, his miracles and divinity? What is the tendency of these preliminary recommendations? In what are

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\* Verse 42. — † Verse 47.

they to end, or what is he thinking of proposing to them? Something very extraordinary no doubt, and very difficult to be received; otherwise he would have explained himself without making use of all these precautions.

The plan he always adopted was distantly to announce the great mysteries he was to accomplish. Thus he taught the necessity of baptism for entering the Kingdom of Heaven, before he instituted it: thus also his disciples often heard him discourse upon his passion, death, and resurrection, and on the descent of the Holy Ghost: thus he announced in this very chapter\* his ascension & return into heaven. By admonishing them before hand, he kept their minds in expectation: he humoured also the weakness of man by sparing him the too lively impressions that unforeseen prodigies would have made upon his senses. Induced by these same motives he gives them intimation of a miracle which he is intending to work, and which would still more astonish human reason. He selected for its announcement the circumstance, which had the most analogy and connexion with the Eucharist, that of the multiplication of the loaves, of which the very people whom he was addressing had just been witnesses.

After convincing them of all the claims he had to their entire confidence, he pro-

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\*Verse 62.



ceeds at last to declare the object he is about, and expresses it concisely in these words, "I am the living bread that came down from Heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world."\* The secret hitherto concealed is now divulged: the great mystery is declared: it has been heard: it has been understood to signify a real presence; but will this real presence be believed? No: the Jews instead of trusting to Jesus Christ as to the manner in which he would give them his flesh to eat, think only of that in which they eat common flesh, they moreover break out into murmurs, look at one another with marks of disapprobation and repugnance, and quickly exclaim, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" They had therefore clearly understood him to speak of a real manducation.

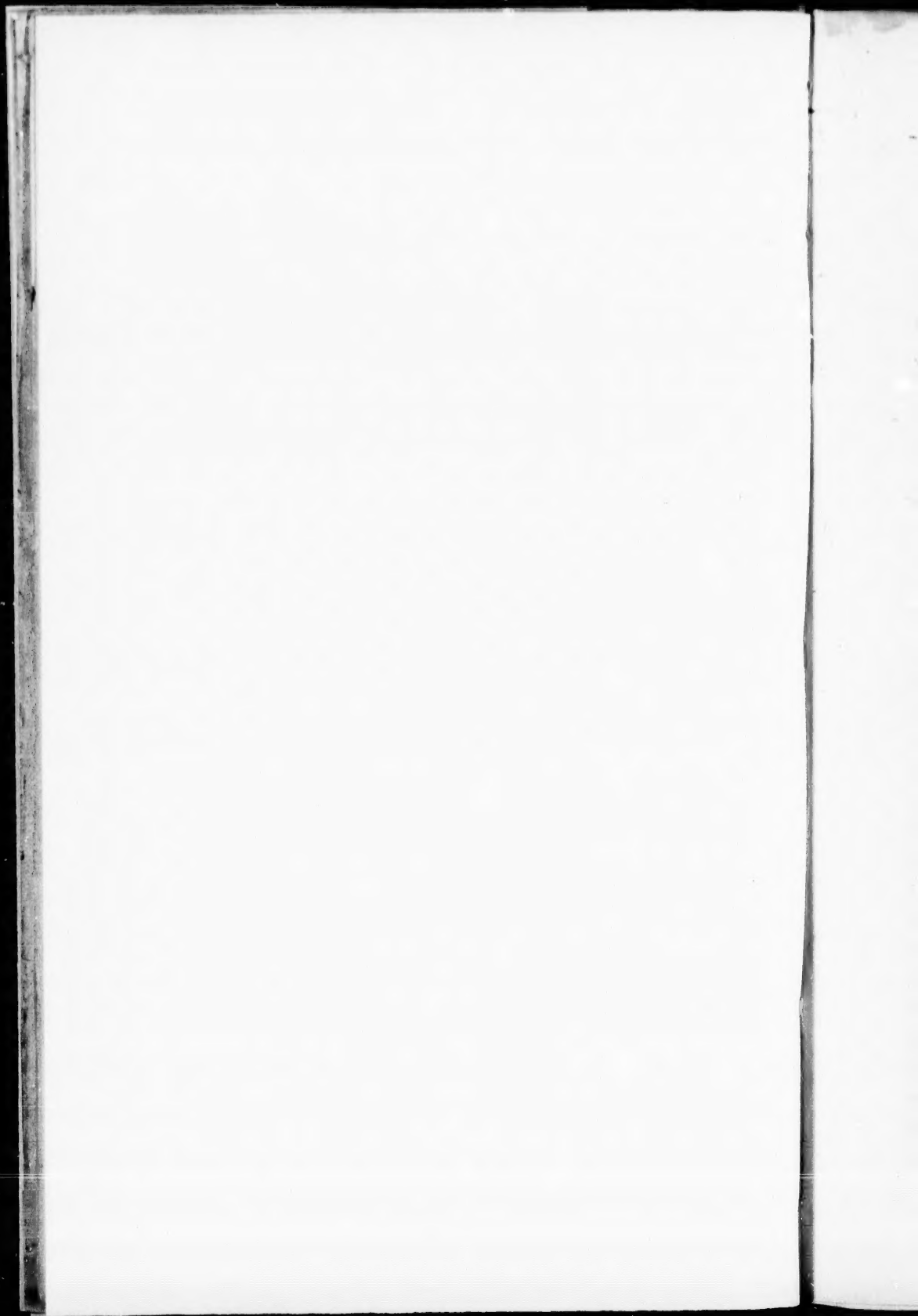
We will proceed no farther for the present. I have here two observations to make to you. When we propose to your teachers and those of their communion the august mystery of the Eucharist, do they not immediately begin to contest it? do they not shew towards our belief signs of disapprobation, contempt, and aversion? do they not disdainfully reply to us in the manner of the Jews of this gospel; "How can he give us his flesh to eat?" In vain do we endeavour to represent to them, that the

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\*Verse 51.

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bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven; that "this bread that he has given is his flesh, that flesh which he has given for the life of the world; and that what God demands of us, is to believe in him whom he has sent;" and that according to the solemn declaration of our Saviour upon this same subject "he who believes in him has everlasting life." In vain do we represent to them again, that how high and incomprehensible soever this real manducation may be, the promise has quite as certainly proceeded from the mouth of Jesus Christ, and that if it is above reason to conceive it, it evidently is against reason to doubt of his word where we cannot doubt that he has given it, and when we acknowledge his divinity, they cease not replying to us with the incredulous Jews; "How can he give us his flesh to eat?"

Let us for a moment change the scene of action, and suppose that one of your missionaries, explaining to infidels this point of Christian doctrine, should produce, without intending it, the idea of a real manducation in the minds of his audience, and that they, being shocked at the proposition, cried out: "What is it you mean to say? or how shall your God be able to give us his flesh to eat?" What would your missionary reply? Should he not say that they had mistaken the meaning of his words; that he never intended to propose to them the

belief of a real manducation : that the flesh of Jesus Christ is not true but figurative meat : that his blood is not real but ideal drink ; that they have only to eat his flesh & drink his blood by faith: that the Eucharistic bread is the symbol of his body, the wine the symbol of his blood : that both one and the other are signs which his love has condescended to consecrate and leave us after him, to console us for his absence. In this way, or at least something like it, would your missionary explain himself in order to remove every idea of a real manducation. But does Jesus Christ set himself in this manner about removing the same idea, at which the Jews shewed themselves so shocked? What reply does he make to the mad insult they offer him, by saying before his face ; "How can this man give us flesh to eat ?" Let us hear what he says in reply.

"Amen, amen, I say unto you (an affirmation which from the mouth of the Man-God is equivalent to an oath) ; except  
 "you eat of the flesh of the Son of man and  
 "drink his blood, you shall not have life in  
 "you, he that eateth my flesh, and drink-  
 "eth my blood, hath everlasting life : and  
 "I will raise him up in the last day. For my  
 "flesh is meat *indeed*, and my blood is  
 "drink *indeed* ; he that eateth my flesh and  
 "drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I  
 "in him. As the living Father has sent  
 "me, and I live by the Father: so also, he

"that eateth me, the same also shall live by  
 "me. This is the bread that came down  
 "from Heaven — He that eateth of this  
 "bread shall live for ever." Are you not  
 struck with what you have just heard? Is  
 there any thing wanting to these words to  
 determine their meaning? Confess that  
 this language is very different from that  
 which we have heard from the mouth of  
 your Missionary. Jesus Christ so far from  
 removing the idea of a real manducation,  
 confirms it anew in the mind of the Jews,  
 shocked as they had already been at it: far  
 from softening down the sense he had already  
 given to his first words, he confirms it  
 by an oath, and continues to present it per-  
 petually in still more energetic terms: far  
 from saying like your teacher, that his flesh  
 is but figurative meat, his blood an ideal  
 drink, he affirms that his flesh is meat *in-*  
*deed*, his blood, drink *indeed*. In the dis-  
 course of the Missionary, we hear of no-  
 thing, but of figure, of symbol, of spiritual  
 manducation, of a memorial and of absence,  
 in that of Jesus Christ there is nothing of  
 all this, not a word of Symbolical or figura-  
 tive language: in it every thing expresses,  
 every thing confirms the reality of his flesh  
 as meat, and of his blood as drink, the re-  
 ality of the manducation; every thing de-  
 clares and supposes his presence in the Sa-  
 crament. He there communicates himself  
 to him who eats it, as common meat is com-  
 municated to him who takes it and derives

life from it : "He that eateth me, abideth in me and "I in him." And again, he that shall eat him shall live by him as he lives by his Father: therefore he shall live by him in reality and in substance, as He lives by his Father. In fine, the truth of the manducation is compared to that of the mission he has received, and what is there more real and better attested than his heavenly mission? Thus you find on the part of Jesus Christ, his presence, communion, and intimacy, by the fact of his body and blood being really given as meat and drink: on the part of man, the reality of the manducation, the certain pledge of life, of resurrection and salvation: and all these prodigies attested by the reiterated affirmations, and even by the oath of the Son of God. What more do you want to determine with certainty the meaning he attached to his words? What is wanting in them to convince you, and force your belief? After having exposed, repeated, and confirmed so many times the sense of his real presence, shall not Jesus Christ succeed at last in persuading you to believe it: and will you always say with these blind and obstinate Jews : "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

Still one more observation. According to the principle of your teachers, the Jews could only have been wrong in understanding literally what he had said figuratively, and in taking for a real manducation, that

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which according to our Saviour's intention was only to take place by faith. But here by attempting to give this turn to the fault of the Jews, your teachers themselves are mistaken. In fact, had it been so, Jesus Christ would have immediately perceived the error of the Jews, and would not have permitted them to have remained in it. There only needed a word to correct their mistake, to appease their murmurs, to reconcile their hearts to his doctrine: and yet this most simple explanation he refused to give them! He who always corrected his disciples whenever they mistook his meaning,\* he who had just performed a miracle to feed this multitude of Jews, and had attached them to him by his favours, he who came down from heaven but to instruct and to save, † he sees them become irritated and embittered against him merely from a misunderstanding, which he can easily remove, and he refuses to do it! he leaves them in error! what do I say? He himself throws them into it! for the strength of his expressions necessarily implied the reality. The Jews understood them so, neither ought they to have taken them in an opposite sense. It belonged to our Saviour to remove from their minds the idea that he had given them of the reality, if he had not wished that they should believe it; yet he does no such thing. It was the re-

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\* Mark, ch. XVI. v. 24.—† St. Mathew, ch. XVI. v. 11.—  
ch. XV. v. 16, § c.

ality then that he had in view, the reality that he meant, the reality that he had promised, and that he wished them to believe beforehand on the word and assurance that he gave them of accomplishing it on a future occasion.

The fault of the Jews did not so much consist in misunderstanding him, as in refusing to believe him, and if they deserved to be condemned, it was not for want of understanding so much as for want of faith. I will explain myself: they understood Jesus Christ to say that he would give in reality, his flesh to eat, and his blood to drink; and they had had good reason for understanding him so: for, most assuredly, it was what he had said. They judged that he could not give them his flesh to eat in the manner that the flesh of animals is eaten; and in this again they were right. What then was their fault? It was this: they were not aware of any other way of eating flesh than of tearing it with their teeth, either raw and bloody, or cooked and dressed: and because this is the only manner they are acquainted with, they conclude that there can be no other manner, and will not believe that there can be some other way unknown to them. They come to a decision according to their own ideas, and measure their faith by their own limited conceptions: and not seeing the possibility of what Jesus announces to them they refuse to believe

it.\* But had they not often heard speak of him as of an extraordinary personage? Had they not approached, known and followed him? Had they not been witness of many miracles, and, quite recently, of the multiplication of the loaves? His deportment, his features, his august and majestic countenance, from which beamed a ray of his shrowded divinity,† his conversation full of a surprising wisdom, his most holy and pure life, every thing should have inspired them with confidence; every thing should have discovered to them in his person a superior character, a prophet who held nature under his control. In addition to this, he had just revealed to them that he was come down from heaven, that he had been sent to them by God his Father: imposture could have

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\*What Jesus Christ had already said to the Jews, with what he afterwards added in speaking in their presence to his disciples, was sufficient to let them understand that they must not adhere to the idea of a carnal manducation. He had already said, many times, that he was himself the living bread, the bread come down from heaven: that the bread that he would give them to eat was his flesh, which he would give for the life of the world: that whoever should eat of this bread should live for ever. By these repeated declarations he gave them sufficiently to understand, that they should eat his flesh under the form or appearance of bread, that they should participate of the substance of his body and be nourished by it under the appearance and image of this ordinary aliment of man: and when soon after he said to his disciples that they should see him go up to where he was before, was it not for the purpose of teaching them that he should not give his flesh to be eaten in a visible manner, because they should see him visibly disappear and mount up into heaven in body and person with all the sensible and natural proportions of the human body? Was not this telling them that although he should give them his flesh to eat, it would still remain, as before, living and entire: that therefore he spoke not of ordinary flesh, which must be given to support a mortal life, and to be torn in pieces and consumed when eaten?

† Certe fulgor ipse et majestas divinitatis occultæ; quæ etiam in humana facie relucebat, ex primo ad se videntes trahere poterat aspectu. Hyeron. *Homil. in Matth.* lib. 1.

no share in such a soul as his was shewn to be, nor could lies proceed from his mouth. The Jews therefore ought to have believed in his heavenly mission and his divinity; they ought to have given credit to all his discourses, and then have said to themselves: "We cannot conceive, it is true, in what manner he can make us eat his flesh and drink his blood: but since he has said it and assured us of it, it certainly must be possible: he certainly must have means, which we know nothing of, for the accomplishment of his promise. He is holy, he is good: he cannot sport with our credulity: he is sent by God, he comes from heaven: he therefore knows all things and can do all things whatsoever he pleases: and when once he assures us that he will give us his flesh to eat and his blood to drink, we are immediately persuaded of it; we are convinced by his only word, and without being able to conceive it, we believe it." This is what they should have thought, should have said and firmly confessed. Their fault and condemnation lie in not having thought or acknowledged it: in having cast aside so many motives which required their entire confidence and reliance upon him: in having preferred their own conceptions to his: in having presumed to consider him as capable of proposing to them what is impossible, that is, of wishing to deceive them, or of deceiving himself, and, in this insulting alterna-

tive, in obstinately refusing to believe him.

These reflections on the unhappiness of the Jews create in my mind another reflection; which makes me afraid for you and those of your communion. Like unto these Jews, you reject the reality of the manducation that Jesus Christ announces to them, and with them you say; "How can he give us his flesh to eat?" But in you this incredulity becomes much more unpardonable. The Jews did not at that time know of the resurrection and ascension of our Saviour, or of the descent of the Holy Ghost announced by him, and followed by so many prodigies that have renewed the face of the earth. These splendid and divine operations have in your regard placed the authority of Jesus Christ beyond any thing the Jews could at that time know of it. They had seen some of his miracles, and had from them concluded that he was the prophet expected in those times. For his divinity they had his assertion, and it was sufficient in such a personage. But, besides this assertion, you have all the proofs of it, and this is much more. You admit these proofs, you profess the divinity of Jesus Christ. Well then! Sir, either cease to profess it, or cease to refuse your belief in him: for to acknowledge him as God and not to believe his word: to hear him clearly telling you that he will give you in reality his flesh to eat, as he has said, and as is demonstrated, and nevertheless to maintain, to persist ob-

stinately in maintaining that the thing is impossible ; this is an extravagance much more insulting, much more to be condemned, than the blind incredulity of the Jews.

The Evangelist,\* as if desirous of giving greater authenticity to his recital, remarks that this conversation took place in the village of Capharnaum, in full synagogue, where the multitude had assembled around Jesus. After the care he had taken to repeat and confirm so often, as we have heard, the reality of the manducation, it would seem that all his hearers should have ceased from their original opposition, and believed unanimously in his words. A melancholy and lamentable example of the weakness, the pride and blindness of the human mind ! Incredulity, far from yielding to repeated assertions, becomes irritated at them. It is no longer among the people only, that it appears ; it reaches even his disciples : "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?"† said many amongst them. Jesus who read their hearts, turns to them and says, "Doth this scandalize you ? If then you shall see the son of man ascend up where he was before ?"‡ Let us weigh well these words : coming from such a person they can never be sufficiently thought upon. If you are shocked, if you are scandalized at what I say to you, that I shall give you my flesh to eat, now that it is upon earth and before

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\* St. John, VI. v. 60. † Verse 61. ‡ Verse 62, 63.



your eyes, how much more will you be scandalized when you shall see it go up to heaven and disappear from your sight? If this manducation appears to you incredible now that you see my body, how much more so will it appear to you, when you shall see it no more? His doctrine therefore was such that after his resurrection it would present more difficulties to be understood than before, and from this I conclude that his doctrine was not such as the reformed attribute to him. For it could not become more difficult for his disciples to comprehend a spiritual and figurative manducation after, than before his ascension: it would not have required any greater exertion to unite themselves to their master as a Saviour and a God, when they should believe him to be at the right hand of his Father, than when they saw him in the midst of them. Indeed, so far must their faith have been from finding a greater difficulty in reaching him in heaven than upon earth, that it must on the contrary have found much less: for the ascension is one of the most splendid proofs of his divinity, and nothing was more calculated to excite the hearts and inflame the faith of the disciples, than the majestic and ravishing spectacle of this prodigy. It must, therefore, become more easy to them afterwards, to believe in Jesus Christ, to feed themselves with his remembrance by receiving the pledges of his love, to unite themselves to him in thought, and to em-



brace him by faith as their Redeemer and God. But in the catholic dogma of the real manducation, the removal of his person, the absence of his visible and natural body must have been for his disciples a fresh difficulty in believing the mystery, and this is so true, that your theologians rest upon the fact of the ascension as an argument against the real presence, and unceasingly repeat to us that he is as far from our altars as is earth from heaven. They are blind and perceive not, that, contrary to their intention, this reasoning turns precisely to the support of our doctrine, by giving it the very character which Jesus Christ here assigns to it, that of appearing more inconceivable after his ascension.

In announcing it to his disciples, he insinuated to them and gave them sufficiently to understand that in the manducation of his flesh there should be nothing for the senses, as they had imagined; and that his presence in it would neither be palpable nor visible, since, according to his natural presence, they would see him disappear and rise up to heaven. He informed them, moreover, that they were not to judge of his body as of other human bodies, incapable of themselves of a similar flight; that his was to be of a divine nature; his flesh being that of the son of God, on which he could imprint the all-powerful virtue and which he could easily convert into a supernatural state. I beg you to remark also that he is

not satisfied with saying to them that they should see him go up into heaven, but also moreover *go up where he was before*. This he said to convince them of his divinity, wishing to ground upon this transcendent and sovereign motive, the faith which he required of them, and which they refused to his words? Now the figurative sense which you give them is so easy, and so much within the reach of our own ideas, that, in that sense, neither would the disciples have ever refused their assent to it, nor would Jesus Christ have had any need to bring forward his divinity in order to extort their belief. Therefore, this sense absolutely cannot be the sense of his words; the only one it is possible to give them is that of the reality.

Your divines have imagined that the following verse brings to the spiritual and figurative sense the whole previous discourse of our Saviour. You shall decide upon it: "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life."\* We have already proved that the words which Jesus Christ had spoken were decisive for the reality; these therefore cannot give them the figurative sense: for it would be absurd to suppose that our Saviour would teach at the same time, or by turns, in the same discourse and on the same subject, two

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\* Verse 64.

senses as opposite as are the reality and the figure. There is also a second and still more forcible proof. If Jesus Christ had concluded by asserting that whatever he had just said must be understood only in a figurative sense, it is evident that both the Jews who had exclaimed against the real manducation, and the disciples who had found it too hard to be understood, would immediately have been reconciled to his doctrine, and more tenderly attached than ever to their master. And yet they all left him, even after his last words, and walked no more with him.\* Their subsequent departure proves, that the disciples discovered in these words no explanation in the figurative sense, and that our Saviour gave them none of this kind, since his only intention in giving it would have been to disabuse them and retain them about his person.

But if you ask of me the signification of these words; "the flesh profiteth nothing: it is the spirit that quickeneth;" I give you that which best agrees with what precedes and follows in the discourse of our Saviour. It is well known that in the scripture language *the flesh* signifies the corporeal senses, or the carnal and corrupted reason of man; while *the spirit* denotes the grace of God, and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Thus our Lord said to Peter: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to

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\* Verse 66.

“thee, but my Father who is in heaven.”\*  
 Thus St. Paul said to the Romans, that Christians “walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.”† He details to the Galatians the works of *the flesh* and those of *the spirit*.‡ In these and other passages, the spirit and the flesh are taken in the sense that I have explained: they are also taken in the same sense in the verse under examination. Our Lord therefore said, that *the flesh*, that is, the senses or corrupt reason of man profiteth nothing towards the discovery or belief of what he had announced. It is still this reality of manducation on which he has so much insisted, of which he here declares that we cannot judge by *the flesh* or by a carnal reason which profiteth nothing, and that it could neither be discerned nor believed except by the *quickening spirit*, that is, by the grace and the light of God. Accordingly he immediately adds: “But “there are some of you who believe not “.....§ therefore did I say unto you, “that no man can come unto me, unless it “be given him by my Father;” || which very much resembles what he said to Peter, who had just been confessing his divinity: “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to “thee, but my Father who is in heaven.” The reason in fact is, that faith is a gift of God, and that in order to be more influen-

\* Matth. ch. XVI. v. 17. † Ch. VIII. v. 4. ‡ Ch. V. v. 20.  
 § St. John, ch. VI. v. 65. || Ch. VI. v. 66.

ced by the proofs on which the credibility of mysteries rests, than by the difficulties that the *senses oppose* to them, we stand in need of succour from above, of the lights and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.\* According to the exposition I have just given you, every thing is regular and connected, every thing is consistent in the discourse of our Saviour.

Have you remarked these words : “ Therefore (i. e. because they do not believe) did I say unto you, that no man can come unto me, unless it be given him by my Father ?” That is to say, that there was need of an assistance, a particular grace from heaven for believing the manducation that was announcing. It was not therefore the manducation, that is recognised in your communion, so natural, so conformable to our ideas that it presents not even the shadow of a mystery and requires not for its belief any effort of the mind, and still less any particular assistance of divine grace.

The words, which immediately precede, present also a reflection which I must not permit to escape ; “ But there are some of you who believe not.” Whence comes this reproach of their incredulity ? To what can it refer ? Ask your divines, if you please and

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\* Spiritus est qui vivificat, caro non prodest quidquam : quod indicat ista Spiritus sancti auxilio intelligi oportere. Carnem enim hoc est rationem humanam in hisce divinis rebus nihil prodere, hoc est caligare et ineptire.—*Centur. Lutheran.* Cent. I. c. IV. col. 167.

you will see their embarrassment, or rather their inability to give any satisfactory reply to your question. At what then were these disciples offended? What was it they refused to believe? It was not any strong expression which our Saviour had made use of: for in that case he would have softened it down: and therefore the reproach of incredulity falls upon the things and not upon the expressions. Neither was it in the manducation taken in the figurative sense, a thing too simple to admit of the possibility of a moments hesitation; it was therefore the reality that they absolutely would not admit. But in the principles of your divines, that would deserve no reproach. These disciples thought it to be impossible; and do not your brethren think the same? and according to them did not these disciples, by refusing their consent, reject what they ought to have rejected? did they not believe what they ought to have believed, by holding it to be impossible? They could not therefore merit any reproach; and Jesus Christ—(may he forgive us)—Jesus Christ reproached them without cause.

After this many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him.\* Here ask again the most skilful of your ministers; ask them why these disciples abandon their master? In vain will you expect a solid reply. They will always tell you, and they have nothing more to say, that these disci-

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\* Verse 67.



ples had permitted themselves to be staggered at expressions which seemed to them to favour the reality of the manducation, which in point of fact our Saviour had only proposed in figure. But he who saw into the interior, would immediately have seen their mistake, and to remove it he had only to say ; " When I spoke to you of giving you my flesh to eat, I merely intended to give you the sign and figure of it, and to inform you that by taking them you would unite yourselves to my flesh by faith : and are not you already thus united, you who are my disciples ?" And they would have fallen at his feet and would never have left him. In fact it is ridiculous to explain this fatal separation by a mere misunderstanding of terms. Men, indeed, are liable to this in their mutual communications, because they cannot read each others thoughts ; but it is absolutely inadmissible between these disciples and Jesus Christ, who clearly saw whatever was passing in their minds. Consider their departure from Christ ; seek out a motive for it as long as you please ; you will find it only in the incomprehensibility of the mystery, In vain does Jesus Christ remind them of his heavenly mission, of his divinity, and the miracles which attested both : nothing could persuade them. Neither the admiration of his person, nor the works of a power that commands nature, nor the benefits they had received, nor those which they had reason to expect,



could make them overcome their repugnance to this real manducation. They obstinately persist in judging of it by *the flesh*, by the corporeal senses, by a confined and corrupted reason; they deem it impossible and will hear no more it: they withdraw. Alas! too often, since then, has this unhappy separation been renewed in the world! How many children of the Church have been lost through the like repugnance to believe the same mystery! How many left her bosom at the time of the reformation, and since that epoch, how many were not and still are not reconciled to it, on account of the same difficulty of embracing this incomprehensible dogma! Thus the same effect that it produced at its first announcement in the world, it still continues to produce in our days: the aversion it occasioned in many disciples to Jesus Christ it still occasions in christians to his Church.

At the time our Saviour saw himself abandoned by many of his disciples, he perceives his apostles in suspense, perhaps between the authority of their master and the incomprehensibility of his doctrine, humbly maintaining a profound silence. But he, wishing to ensure their attachment and faith, said to the twelve: "Will you also leave me?" And Simon Peter answered him; "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life: we have be-

lieved and have known that thou art the Christ the Son of God."\* Had the Apostles here given, as a motive of their continuance with him, that they had taken the words of Jesus Christ in the figurative sense, and understood that to eat his flesh and drink his blood meant to be intimately united to him by faith, then it would be fair to conclude that the disciples had taken those same words in too literal a sense. But so far are the apostles from expressing any such thing, that it is evident from their answer that they had inferred from them the reality of the manducation, as well as the disciples: but that having more confidence and being less disposed to judge by the *flesh* than by the *spirit*, and corresponding better with *grace*, they left entirely to our Saviour the manner in which he would accomplish his promise, although they could not conceive or imagine any. They believed what they could not understand, but it was what Jesus Christ had positively told them over and over again to believe: they believed because the words of truth and life eternal being in his mouth, he could not himself be deceived, nor deceive them: they believed, because they knew him to be the Son of God, the Christ, having power to do beyond what human reason could attain or conceive. These were their motives. Assuredly the easy figurative sense would have required none of this exertion. There was, there-

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fore, something incomprehensible to them in the words of our Saviour: they discovered in them the ineffable mystery that we discover: and the motives upon which they grounded their belief are absolutely the same and the only ones on which the Catholic Church has always rested hers.

Let us, if you please, cast a rapid glance over the arguments we have developed in the examination of this chapter.

1° Jesus Christ begins by producing the great motives that are to convince his hearers of the obligations of believing in his words. Therefore he has something to propose to them which will be in itself very difficult to be believed.

2° Jesus Christ comes to the proposal of it, and says that he is the *bread that quickeneth*, that the bread which he will give them to eat, *is his flesh, which he will give for the life of the world*. The Jews take the natural sense of these words, and reject it, because the manducation of his flesh appears to them impossible: therefore they understood his words of a true and real manducation.

3° The carnal manner in which they represented to themselves this manducation, evidently supposes the reality of it, and not less evidently excludes the figure. Then, it was the reality they understood.

4° If they had been mistaken in understanding the reality, our Saviour would have disabused them immediately. But

far from disabusing them, by explaining himself in a figurative sense, he resumes what he first proposed, repeats it six times in succession, and always with expressions still stronger for the reality, and even with an oath. Therefore he had the reality in view, and in it he required their belief.

5° Many of the disciples take offence at the words they had just heard our Saviour pronounce in six successive verses, and declare them to be too hard to be borne. Therefore these words conveyed the sense of the reality, incomprehensible to the human mind, and not the figurative sense so conformable to our ideas.

6° Instead of softening down the expressions which alienated the disciples, Jesus Christ declares that if they are scandalized now, they shall soon be scandalized still more when they shall see him going up to where he was before ; that is, that his doctrine will then appear to them more incredible than before his ascension. Now the figurative manducation becomes still more easy to believe after his ascension, and the real manducation appears more incredible in consequence. Therefore it is not the former, but the latter which had been announced.

7° Jesus Christ who never reproached his disciples with not having understood the sense of his discourse, reproaches them here for not believing. Now the reproach for not believing can only fall on the rea-

lity. Therefore he had announced the reality in his discourse,

8° Jesus reproaches them with not believing in this reality. Therefore they did wrong, and you do still more so, in pronouncing it to be indefensible. The Jews and disciples judged soundly according to you, by deeming this manducation impossible. Therefore your judgment, like that of the Jews and the disciples, is in direct opposition to that of Jesus Christ, and you are all equally condemned together.

9° Jesus declares that no one can believe in him concerning this manducation, if he have not received grace from his Father. Now, to believe a figurative manducation, there is no need of any grace, since there is no need of any exertion : therefore he speaks not of that kind of manducation.

10° The doctrine of our Saviour on the manducation is such that it hindered many of the Jews from believing in him, and induced many disciples to abandon him. Now the doctrine of the Catholic Church on this point is also such, that it prevents many Christians from joining its creed, and has induced many of its children to quit it : whereas the doctrine of the reformed, whatever be the strength of the expressions they make use of in the Lord's Supper, has never engaged any one to quit them, nor prevented any one from joining them. Therefore the doctrine of the reformed upon this manducation has



not the characters of the doctrine of our Saviour, whereas that of the Catholic Church has them all ; therefore the catholic faith is the doctrine of our Saviour.

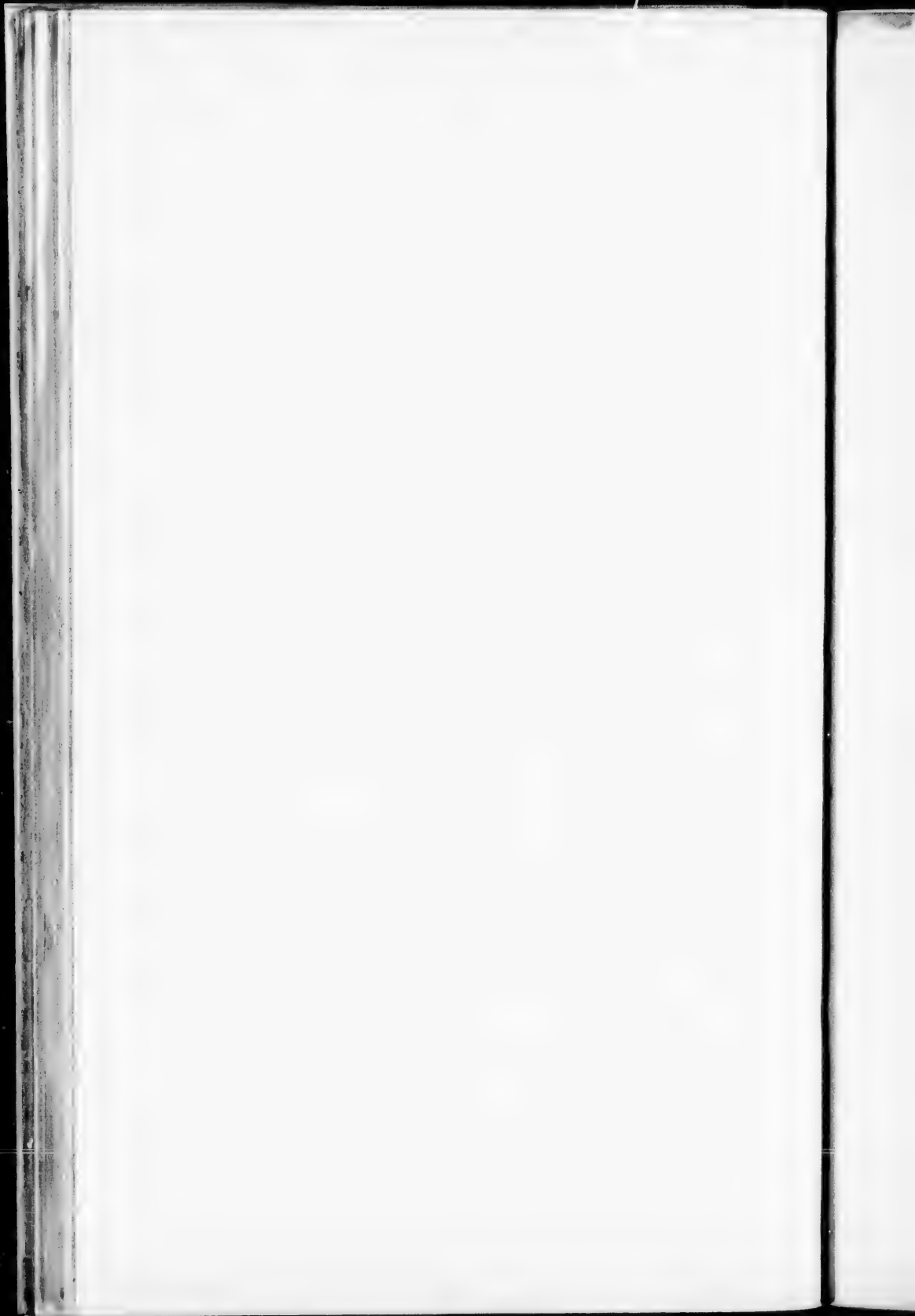
11° The disciples leave their master rather than believe ; the apostles adhere to him, grounding their belief on his divinity and his sovereign power. Now the former would never have abandoned such a master for not believing so simple a thing as a figurative manducation, and the latter would have had no need, in order to believe it, to recall to mind his infinite power and his divinity. Therefore neither the one nor the other understood this manducation in a figurative sense : therefore that of the reality is the only sense, which can explain at once the opposite conduct of these disciples and the apostles.

In concluding this article, permit me, Sir, to address to you one final observation. I know not what impression will have been made upon you by this contrast between the apostles on one side, and the Jews and many disciples on the other. Change the times and the names, and you there read the history of the opposition that exists between those of your communion, and us. I feel with regret every thing they will find odious in this comparison I entreat them to pardon me for it, it is even more painful for me to have to tell them hard truths, than for them to hear them : nothing would ever have induced me to do it, but the hope

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of being serviceable to them, even at the purchase of their displeasure. We must therefore here again open for a moment before you, and them, the scene at Capharnaum, in order that you may see how strikingly it applies to the supporters of your reformation. They have renewed it, and they copy it daily with so much fidelity that you will see them performing the same characters and the same parts as the Jews and disciples: you will see them borrow their language, imitate their actions, their conduct, and carry on the resemblance even to the catastrophe. In fact, when we tell them that Jesus Christ is *the living bread that came down from heaven: that the bread which he gives us to eat is his own flesh, the same that he has given for the life of the world*, they rise up against this proposition which is precisely that which, in the mouth of Jesus Christ produced the departure of the Jews. Like them they shew a thousand signs of impatience, of disdain, of contempt, they hold us as foolish and absurd, they treat our doctrine as impossible, and extravagant, and thus produce again, under a thousand insulting forms the rude exclamation of the Jews: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" In vain do we represent, *unless we eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, we shall not have life in us: that his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed: that we learn it from him who was sent by his Father,*

*and who came down from heaven to instruct and save us* : that his order is that we all believe in his word, &c.: they still remain as immoveable as ever in their past incredulity : they pass over to the disciples and repeat with them and with much more bitterness : *This saying is hard, and who can hear it?* We persevere in our endeavours to soften their inflexibility: we suggest that this mystery is proposed to us by him who is gone up to where he was before : that it is unreasonable to believe in his divinity and not to believe in his doctrine: these proud men listen no more to us : they treat us either with contempt or pity, and the same reason that induced the disciples to leave Christ, induces them also to leave us. Let them boast now of the high antiquity of their principles : they may date them, if they please, from the Christian era : incontestibly they have a right to do so : on this point I recognize them as partisans and associates of the Jews in this gospel, as successors and heirs of the disciples, I mean of these ungrateful and unfortunate disciples, whom the Holy Spirit has marked out to us in scripture as the first apostates from Jesus Christ. Can a man be a christian and not blush at such a descent ? Can he be a christian and not tremble at the idea of sharing in the opinions, obstinacy, desertion, and lot, of these ancient renegades.

For your part at least, Sir, reflect; I conjure you, on the danger to which you

are exposed by the prejudices of your education. Have the courage to emancipate yourself from them; it certainly must cost you less to quit an opinion which is not of your own choice. Imagine yourself for a moment in the midst of the synagogue where this important affair was discussed, and that you witness all that passes. You distinguish our divine Saviour surrounded by his apostles and disciples: you attentively listen with them to the words that come from his mouth, and at that part of his discourse where he comes to the mystery, you hear the confused murmurs, and afterwards the declared opposition of the multitude. In vain does our Saviour exert himself to persuade them, by repeatedly affirming what he had just announced; the multitude remain deaf: and soon you remark the repugnance even of many of his disciples, you notice their words of contradiction, and then their entire desertion from him. On the other side you admire the firmness, the liveliness of the faith of the apostles, and what is more striking through the whole of this scene, the calm countenance and unalterable sweetness of the Man-God. All this passes before your eyes; I suppose you to be present at it. Now what are you yourself going to do? you must declare yourself. On what side will you range yourself? will you adhere with them to your divine master? or will you turn your back upon him with the crowd of the murmur-

ers? You are indignant at my question: is there any room for hesitation? You say to me. Well then! Sir, take now the part that you would then decidedly have taken with the apostles. The dispute unfortunately still continues. It has been renewed for nearly three centuries with more violence than at its birth, and with still more deplorable consequences. It is no longer between the Jews and in the synagogue, but in the Church, and among christians: Jesus Christ is still in the midst of them; he continues to speak the same language to them. You have just heard him: surrender yourself therefore to him,

THE END.



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